

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments and these remarks are in response to the Office Action dated October 17, 2007. This amendment is filed with a request for an extension of time, and authorization to charge the appropriate fees therefor to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-28 and 30-39 were pending in the application. In the Office Action, the application was objected to because it lacks an abstract. Claims 1-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 12, 14, 15, 17-23, 25, 26, 28, 31-33 and 35-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Claims 1, 9-13, 16, 19, 24, 27, 38 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The objections and rejections are discussed in more detail below.

I. Objection to Specification

The application was objected to because it was alleged not to contain an abstract. Applicant notes that the abstract was filed with the application on February 4, 2005. However, an additional copy of the abstract on a separate sheet of paper is enclosed herewith. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention, and in particular for a large number of antecedent basis issues. Many of the antecedent basis rejections were not understood by Applicant, because in Applicant's view appropriate antecedent basis was provided (for example, for the transillumination area). Nevertheless, appropriate corrections are made herein where possible, and Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn by the Examiner.

III. Rejections based upon Art

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 12, 14, 15, 17-23, 25, 26, 28, 31-33 and 35-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,510,782 to Norris et al. ("*Norris*"). Claims 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Norris* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,975,711 to Parker et al. Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Norris* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,397,867 to Demeo. Claims 1, 12, 16, 24, 27 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,565,223 to Liao et al. ("*Liao*") in view of *Norris*. Claims 1, 19 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,664,489 to Kleinhans et al. ("*Kleinhans*") in view of *Norris*.

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. *Norris* clearly discloses in Figures 1, 2 and 3 that the light of the light sources 44 distributed by the light-transmitting insert 32 can only shine through openings 76 in the top wall 32 of shell 30. As such, the difference with regard to claim 1 of the present application is that according to present claim 1 a material thickness of a covering material may be reduced but it is still present and does not have any openings or the like.

Even though *Norris* discloses in column 4, lines 28 to 40, a material thickness in the range of claim 6 of the present application, the provision of the openings 76 for displaying a symbol like the letter "F" according to figure 1, shows that a person of ordinary skill in the art could not have been led to the invention recited in claim 1. Furthermore, in column 3, lines 13-16, it is explicitly stated that the top wall is opaque to the passage of light.

The Examiner also rejects claim 1 over *Liao* in view of *Norris*. In Figures 2 to 5, *Liao* discloses a lighted function graphic 56 on top of control member 50. Control member 50 is made from a possibly light-transmitting material that is opaquely masked to display a desired function symbol. That means that the light transmitting function of control member 50 is not achieved by any reduced material thickness but by the choice of the material itself. The material is transparent in itself and is only masked except for the symbols that can be illuminated from below.

As to the further rejection of claim 1 over *Kleinhans* in view of *Norris*, Applicant notes that *Kleinhans* does not disclose any display device having a reduced material thickness. The symbol according to Figures 2 and 3, that can be produced by the recess 22 in the sensor surface 12, is a

material opening in the sensor surface and not a reduced material thickness. The same argumentation as to *Norris* applies.

As a conclusion, all the prior art documents only disclose the possibility for creating a transparent illumination area by openings in an otherwise non-transparent material (*Norris* and *Kleinhans*). *Liao* discloses a transparent material that is masked with opaque color or the like for leaving the form of a symbol that can be transilluminated by a light source.

As such, claim 1 is regarded as patentable when compared to the prior art, and is believed to be in condition for allowance. The same applies to independent claim 28. The dependent claims are also believed allowable because of their dependence upon an allowable base claim, and because of the further features recited therein.

IV. Conclusion

Applicant has made every effort to present claims which distinguish over the prior art, and it is thus believed that all claims are in condition for allowance. Nevertheless, Applicants invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance. In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

Date: 3/17/08

Respectfully submitted,



J. Rodman Steele, Jr.
Registration No. 25,931
Sarah E. Smith
Registration No. 50,488
AKERMAN SENTERFITT
Post Office Box 3188
West Palm Beach, FL 33402-3188
Telephone: (561) 653-5000